



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT HELPS TO EXPAND WEST HOLT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

**Ainsworth, Neb., October 12, 2004**—The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development has awarded a loan for nearly \$3 million to West Holt Memorial Hospital (WHMH) of Atkinson, Neb. The funds will save 50 jobs through the expanding and renovating of the hospital facility to comply with state and federal regulatory guidelines, improved patient services and through refinancing to more favorable rates and terms.

“The opportunity to work with USDA Rural Development in stabilizing healthcare for all of our patients into the future is exciting. West Holt Memorial provides 80 full-time equivalents with a total 103 people having employment. This expansion, via the USDA loan, will provide needed patient space and updating of services to meet all guidelines. West Holt is dedicated in partnering with the USDA to give our patients the highest quality healthcare rurally,” stated Mel Snow administrator for WHMH.

USDA funds will allow for renovations and a 4,600 square foot addition to the admission and business office areas to comply with Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act guidelines. Closed in business offices, privacy booths and infrastructure to add computerized medical records will be featured. Additionally, there will be upgrades to other areas of the existing facility made to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. A connecting link will be built between the new business office and the existing clinic. Paving, curbing and seeding are also included in the project. Renovations to the cafeteria area to comply with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services regulations are to take place along with enlargement of the emergency room area and upgrading the associated entrance to include an enclosed squad garage and vestibule.

Funding is provided through the USDA Rural Development Community Facility Direct Loan program. Total costs of the capital improvement project are estimated at \$1,998,300 with the total refinancing to be at \$1,088,700. Loan terms are 30 years at a 4.50 percent rate of interest.

“It has been a pleasure to work with the staff at West Holt Memorial Hospital,” stated Mary Gambill, rural development manager for USDA Rural Development. “Today’s funding announced will help ensure that the hospital has what is needed to continue the delivery of quality medical services to its patients and to sustain health care to the rural communities it serves.”

West Holt Memorial Hospital owns and operates the 18 bed facility complete with an adjoining pharmacy and clinic. The 15,000 square foot clinic was built in 1997. WHMH is a

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Critical Access facility and provides all the basic hospital services including surgery. Chelation is available with accreditation in Pain Management to soon follow. These special services draw patients from across the state and three adjoining states. The facility serves the 8,177 households in Rock County, and portions of Holt, Boyd, Keya Paha Counties. Rock and Keya Paha Counties have been identified as medically underserved areas that are experiencing a shortage of medical professionals.

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